

INFORMATION GATHERING NATURE ON DIGITAL SHOPPING AMONG ONLINE SHOPPERS IN CHENNAI: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Today, online shopping and e-business gaining momentum, there exists necessity in providing the product information in digital form. The online shoppers were keen in gathering information before procuring the items. Apparel shopping was primarily need based. Information gathering nature of youth in Chennai were considered based on the awareness of shopping web sites, internet and visiting physical store before buying online. About 175 questionnaires were distributed randomly during their visit to the mall, of which 143 were responded. The response rate seems to be 81.7%. The social media has been indicated as first preference of information gathering nature among the respondents. It is followed by word of mouth and print & TV media. Email links were indicated as least preference. The internet usage also helps in information gathering nature on digital shopping among online shoppers. Information, entertainment and social media were the first three preferences by the respondents. In this study, the respondents visiting physical store before buying online have been analysed. The respondents use to visit the physical stores before buying online for checking the price followed by feel and quality of the garment.

KEYWORDS: Digital Shopping, Online, E-Tailing, Shopping Behaviour, Youth & Organized Retail

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INTRODUCTION

Today, online shopping and e-business gaining momentum, there exists necessity in providing the product information in digital form. The approach to the digital information differs from individual to individual, environment to environment and domain to domain. Similarly the information gathering nature of online shoppers also differs. In this study, an attempt has been made to identify the information gathering nature of online shoppers that perhaps drive the next phase of e-tailing.

DIGITAL SHOPPING

Digital shopping means merchandise sold through online using internet by various shopping sites and also includes online market place. Digital transformation and latest changing information technology are playing a vital role in improvising root of e-tailing and has mushroomed in India, at present contributes about 15% of the organized retail and is expected to reach 25% by 2020 and can even increase manifold in next ten years as digital network would spread in the rural areas with economy driven middle class (The Hindu).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Online retailing is seen as revolutionary in the world of retail industry and is giving a threatening competition to traditional retail. Online retailing is like money making from the wallets of the customers to the

bank statements of the retailers. (Poonia, 2015). The E-tailing website is like the entrance door of the online store where the online seller and the consumer can interact and make transaction without too much time. In India, consumers are increasingly tilting towards online to shop. Consumers are always craving for modern ways of shopping and to retain an e-customer, e-tailers must attract through innovative means. (Mankar & Muley, 2016). The concept of shopping confidence reflects consumers' belief in their ability to shop for clothing and select the right products for themselves. Brand or store loyalty describes a consumer's tendency to continue to patronize the brand and /or online store they prefer, which also suggests self confidence in the consumer's ability to evaluate alternatives. In this study, convenience consciousness refers to consumers' preference to put minimal effort into the clothing purchase process. Convenience therefore implies concern for ease-of-use, issues such as accessibility and simplicity of navigation (Gehrt et al., 2007; Workman & Cho, 2012).

OBJECTIVE

- To identify the information gathering nature among the digital shoppers
- To identify the means of awareness of digital shopping web sites among the respondents.
- To identify the role of internet on digital shopping
- To identify whether the respondents visit physical store before buying online

HYPOTHESIS

- There exist Information gathering nature among the digital shoppers irrespective of gender and age
- There exists exposure on the means of awareness of digital shopping web sites among the respondents.
- There exist impact on the role of internet on digital shopping
- The digital shopper prefer to visit physical store before buying online

DATA COLLECTION

About 175 questionnaires were distributed randomly during their visit to the mall, of which 143 were responded. The response rate seems to be 81.7%.

Demographic Data

The demographic details of respondents such as gender, age, education, occupation, annual income, marital status and nativity are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Details

S. No	Description	Frequency	%	Cum %
GENDER				
1	Male	38	26.6	26.6
2	Female	105	73.4	100.0
AGE				
1	Under 21	59	41.3	41.3
2	Above 21	84	58.7	100.0
EDUCATION				
1	+2	84	58.7	58.7
2	Graduate	37	25.9	84.6
3	PG	22	15.4	100.0

Table 1: Contd.,				
	OCCUPATION			
1	Student or/and not working	112	78.3	78.3
2	Student or/and part time working	8	5.6	83.9
3	Self employed	6	4.2	88.1
4	Professional	10	7.0	95.1
5	I T Professional	4	2.8	97.9
6	Others	3	2.1	100.0
	ANNUAL INCOME			
1	Up to 2 lakhs	101	70.6	70.6
2	Lakhs 2-4	26	18.2	88.8
3	Lakhs 4-6	5	3.5	92.3
4	Lakhs6-8	6	4.2	96.5
5	Lakhs8-10	3	2.1	98.6
6	Lakhs 10 & above	2	1.4	100.0
	MARITAL STATUS			
1	Single	127	88.8	88.8
2	Married	16	11.2	100.0
	AREA			
1	Urban	106	74.1	74.1
2	Semi urban	30	21.0	95.1
3	Rural	7	4.9	100.0

Out of 143 respondents, 38 (26.6%) were male and 105 (73.4%) were female. 59 (41.3%) respondents were in the age group of under 21, 84 (58.7%) respondents were in the age group of above 21. 84 (58.7%) respondents were +2 qualified, 37 (25.9%) were graduates and 22 (15.4%) were post graduates. 112 (78.3%) respondents were students. 101 (70.6%) respondents' annual income were less than rupees two lakhs and 26 (18.2%) respondents' annual income were between rupees 2-4 lakhs. 127 (88.8%) respondents were single and 16 (11.2%) were married. 106 (74.1%) respondents were hailing from urban and 30 (21%) were from semi urban.

Data Analysis

Information gathering nature of online shopping youth in Chennai were considered based on the

- Awareness of shopping web sites
- Internet
- Visiting physical store before buying online

Awareness of Shopping Web Sites

In general, apparel shopping were primarily need based. However, in this study, the awareness of shopping websites have been analysed based on five variables such as word of mouth, print & TV media, search engine, social media and link emails. The opinions of the respondents were given in Table 2. The mean and standard deviation were calculated based on the opinion. The ranks were ascertained based on mean and standard deviation. The respondent's opinion, mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Awareness of Shopping Web Sites

S. No.	Description	Not at all		Rarely		Moderate		Large Extent		V. large Extent.		Mean	Std	Rank
1	Word of mouth	20	14.0%	27	18.9%	28	19.6%	32	22.4%	36	25.2%	3.26	1.388	2
2	Print & TV media	15	10.5%	34	23.8%	28	19.6%	46	32.2%	20	14.0%	3.15	1.235	3
3	Search engine	16	11.2%	37	25.9%	37	25.9%	41	28.7%	12	8.4%	2.97	1.156	4
4	Social media	17	11.9%	15	10.5%	30	21.0%	41	28.7%	40	28.0%	3.50	1.321	1
5	Link emails	50	35.0%	27	18.9%	22	15.4%	17	11.9%	27	18.9%	2.61	1.525	5

The mean value of all the five variables ranges between 2.61 and 3.50 which indicate that the respondent's dependency lies between moderate to large extent. The standard deviation ranges between 1.156 and 1.525 which indicates that there was no much deviation in their opinion. The social media has been indicated as first preference of information gathering nature among the respondents. It is followed by word of mouth and print & TV media. Email links were indicated as least preference.

The study has further been extended to gender. The mean and standard deviation of male and female were calculated based on the responses. The ranks were assigned based on mean and standard deviation. The gender wise mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Awareness of Shopping Web Sites Vs Gender

S. No.	Description	Male			Female		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Word of mouth	2.92	1.440	4	3.38	1.354	2
2	Print & TV media	3.18	1.333	2	3.14	1.204	3
3	Search engine	3.16	1.285	3	2.90	1.105	4
4	Social media	3.50	1.371	1	3.50	1.309	1
5	Link emails	2.63	1.384	5	2.60	1.579	5

The mean value of male respondents ranges between 2.63 and 3.50 which indicate that the opinion lies between moderate and large extent. The social media has been given as first preference in gathering information on shopping web sites. It is followed by print and TV media and Search engine. The least preference was indicated to link mail. In the case of female the mean value ranges between 2.60 and 3.50 which indicates that the opinion lies between moderate and large extent as like that of male. The first preference was given to social media. The word of mouth earmarked as their second preference and followed by Print and TV media. There exists unique opinion in the case of least preference irrespective of gender.

The study has further been extended to age of digital shoppers. In this study the age of digital shopper were grouped into two categories such as below 21 years and above 21 years. Their opinion, mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Awareness of Shopping Web Sites Vs Age

S. No.	Description	Below 21			Above 21			Overall		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Word of mouth	3.03	1.377	2	3.42	1.382	2	3.26	1.388	2
2	Print & TV media	2.81	1.238	4	3.39	1.182	3	3.15	1.235	3
3	Search engine	2.88	1.068	3	3.04	1.217	4	2.97	1.156	4
4	Social media	3.42	1.354	1	3.56	1.302	1	3.50	1.321	1
5	Link emails	2.56	1.653	5	2.64	1.437	5	2.61	1.525	5

The mean value of respondents whose age was below 21 years ranges between 2.56 and 3.42 which indicate that the opinion lies between moderate and large extent. The social media has been given first preference in gathering information on shopping web sites. It is followed by word of mouth and Search engine. The least preference was indicated to link mail. In the case of respondents whose age were above 21 mean value ranges between 2.61 and 3.50 which indicates that the opinion lies between moderate and large extent as like that of below 21 years age. The first preference was given to social media. The word of mouth earmarked as their second preference and followed by print and TV media. There exists unique opinion in the case of least preference irrespective of age.

The preferences of respondents based on gender and age were compared with overall rank and the same has been shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Awareness of Shopping Websites – Comparison of Ranks

S. No	Description	Male	Female	Below 21	Above 21	Overall
1	Word of mouth	4	2	2	2	2
2	Print & TV media	2	3	4	3	3
3	Search engine	3	4	3	4	4
4	Social media	1	1	1	1	1
5	Link emails	5	5	5	5	5

It is evident that there exist uniformity in the case of first preference and least preferences. In the case of other variables, the preferences got interchanged. The overall preferences get synchronized with female and above 21 years age group. In the case of male and under 21, the first preference, third preference and last preference were identical whereas in the case of second and fourth responses get interchanged.

From the above it is evident that here exists exposure on the means of awareness of digital shopping web sites among the respondents.

Internet

The internet usage also helps in information gathering nature on digital shopping among online shoppers. Hence usage of internet has been analysed based on seven variables such as research, social media, games, shopping, information, entertainment and business. The opinions of the respondents were shown in Table 6. The mean and standard deviation were calculated. The preference rank thus assigned based on mean and standard deviation were shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Internet

S. No.	Description	Not at all		Rarely		Moderate		Large extent		V. L. extent		Mean	Std.	Rank
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%			
1	Research	13	9.1%	13	9.1%	28	19.6%	30	21.0%	59	41.3%	3.76	1.321	4
2	Social media	9	6.3%	18	12.6%	24	16.8%	38	26.6%	54	37.8%	3.77	1.254	3
3	Games	31	21.7%	37	25.9%	28	19.6%	24	16.8%	23	16.1%	2.80	1.382	6
4	Shopping	12	8.4%	21	14.7%	43	30.1%	35	24.5%	32	22.4%	3.38	1.221	5
5	Information	7	4.9%	12	8.4%	18	12.6%	43	30.1%	63	44.1%	4.00	1.163	1
6	Entertainment	10	7.0%	18	12.6%	19	13.3%	32	22.4%	64	44.8%	3.85	1.305	2
7	Business	38	26.6%	31	21.7%	28	19.6%	21	14.7%	25	17.5%	2.75	1.441	7

The mean value of all the variables ranges between 2.75 and 3.85 which indicate that all the variables accepted as moderate to very large extent. The deviation in their opinion was also negligible. Information, entertainment and social media were the first three preferences by the respondents. The least preferences were indicated as business and games.

The analysis has further been extended to gender of the respondents. The mean and standard deviation thus calculated based on opinion are shown in Table 7 along with rank assigned based on mean and standard deviation.

Table 7: Internet Vs Gender

S. No.	Description	Male			Female		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Research	3.71	1.374	4	3.78	1.308	4
2	Social media	3.74	1.267	3	3.78	1.256	3
3	Games	3.18	1.373	6	2.66	1.365	6
4	Shopping	3.37	1.303	5	3.38	1.196	5
5	Information	4.03	1.197	1	3.99	1.156	1
6	Entertainment	3.97	1.174	2	3.81	1.352	2
7	Business	3.11	1.140	7	2.62	1.437	7

The male respondents mean value ranges between 3.11 and 4.03 which indicate that the variables were lies between moderate and large extent. In the case of female the mean value ranges between 2.62 and 3.99 indicates the same opinion as like that of male. Even though there exist difference in mean value between the male and female, the order of preferences were identical.

The study has further been extended to age of the respondents. The responses, mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Internet Vs Age

S. No.	Description	Below 21			Above 21			Total		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Research	3.71	1.415	3	3.80	1.259	4	3.76	1.321	4
2	Social media	3.69	1.393	4	3.82	1.153	3	3.77	1.254	3
3	Games	2.88	1.340	6	2.74	1.415	7	2.80	1.382	6
4	Shopping	3.32	1.181	5	3.42	1.254	5	3.38	1.221	5
5	Information	4.03	1.189	1	3.98	1.151	1	4.00	1.163	1
6	Entertainment	3.85	1.350	2	3.86	1.281	2	3.85	1.305	2
7	Business	2.54	1.291	7	2.89	1.529	6	2.75	1.441	7

The mean value of respondents whose age was below 21 years ranges between 2.54 and 4.03 which indicate that the opinion lies between moderate and large extent. The information and entertainment were given as first two preferences by both the age groups of below 21 and above 21 in internet usage. It is followed by research and social media by both the age groups with change in the order of preference. The least preference was indicated as business by the below 21 years age group and games by above 21 years age group. There exists similarity in the opinion in case of first two preferences irrespective of age.

The preferences of respondents based on gender and age were compared with overall rank and the same has been shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Internet - Comparison of Ranks

S. No	Description	Male	Female	Below 21	Above 21	Overall
1	Research	4	4	3	4	4
2	Social media	3	3	4	3	3
3	Games	6	6	6	7	6
4	Shopping	5	5	5	5	5
5	Information	1	1	1	1	1
6	Entertainment	2	2	2	2	2

Table 9: Contd.,						
7	Business	7	7	7	6	7

It is evident that there exists uniformity in the case of first two preferences. In the case of other variables, the preferences got interchanged. The overall preferences get synchronized with male, female and above 21 years age group. In the case of under 21 years age, the first two preferences and fifth preference were identical whereas in the other preferences got interchanged. From the above it is evident that here exists exposure on the use of internet

Visiting Physical Store before Buying Online

The respondents visiting physical store before buying online have been analysed based on four variables such as quality check, fit & comfort check, feel of garment and price check. The opinions were given in Table 10. The mean and standard deviation were calculated. The preference rank thus assigned based on mean and standard deviation were shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Visiting Physical Store before Buying Online

S. No.	Description	SD		D		NO		A		SA		Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Quality check	32	22.4%	64	44.8%	35	24.5%	9	6.3%	3	2.1%	2.21	.933	3
2	Fit, comfort check	46	32.2%	54	37.8%	35	24.5%	4	2.8%	4	2.8%	2.06	.966	4
3	Feel of garment	39	27.3%	44	30.8%	48	33.6%	12	8.4%	0	.0%	2.44	2.741	2
4	Price check	28	19.6%	43	30.1%	48	33.6%	18	12.6%	6	4.2%	2.52	1.074	1

Table 10 reveals that the respondents use to visit the physical stores before buying online for checking the price followed by feel and quality of the garment. The correlation test thus administrated to the variable to identify the correlation among the variables. The correlation value between the variables along mean and standard deviation are shown Table 11.

Table 11: Visiting Physical Store before Buying Online - Correlation Test

S. No.	Variables	Mean	Std.	1	2	3	4
1	Quality check	2.21	.933	1			
2	Fit, comfort check	2.06	.966	.509**	1		
3	Feel of garment	2.44	2.741	.313**	.242**	1	
4	Price check	2.52	1.074	.270**	.294**	.211*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

All the variables thus taken up for the study were positively correlated. Further all the variables in a 2-tailed correlation test were significant either at 95% level or 99% level

The analysis has been extended to gender of the respondents against visiting the physical store before buying online and the same has been shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Visiting Physical Store before Buying Online Vs Gender

S. No.	Description	Male			Female		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Quality check	1.84	.547	4	2.34	1.008	3
2	Fit, comfort check	1.87	.777	3	2.13	1.020	4
3	Feel of garment	2.05	.899	2	2.58	3.146	1
4	Price check	2.37	.998	1	2.57	1.099	2

It can be seen from the Table 12 that in case of male respondents the reason to visit physical stores indicated as price check followed by feel, fit and comfort check whereas in case of female respondents the preferences were feel of the garment followed by price and quality check.

The study has further been extended to age of the respondents against visiting physical store before buying online. The responses, mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in table 13.

Table 13: Visiting Physical Store before buying Online Vs Age

S. No.	Description	Below 21			Above 21			Total		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Quality check	2.31	1.004	3	2.14	.880	3	2.21	.933	3
2	Fit, comfort check	2.20	.846	4	1.96	1.035	4	2.06	.966	4
3	Feel of garment	2.32	.973	2	2.52	3.490	1	2.44	2.741	2
4	Price check	2.58	1.117	1	2.48	1.047	2	2.52	1.074	1

It is evident from Table 13, that under 21 years and above 21 of age group, there exists uniformity in the case of second and third preferences. In the case of the first preferences got interchanged. The overall preferences get synchronized with less than 21 years age group.

The preferences of respondents based on gender and age were compared with overall rank and the same has been shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Internet- Overall Response

S. No	Description	Male	Female	Below 21	Above 21	Overall
1	Quality check	4	3	3	3	3
2	Fit, comfort check	3	4	4	4	4
3	Feel of garment	2	1	2	1	2
4	Price check	1	2	1	2	1

The overall preferences get synchronized with less than 21 years age. Similarly above 21 years age get synchronized with female. The third and fourth preferences were identical between female, under 21, above 21 and overall whereas in the case of male it gets interchanged. Similarly the first two preferences were got interchanged between male and female as well as under 21 years age and above 21 years age group.

FINDINGS

The study has led to the following findings.

- The online shoppers were keen in gathering information before procuring the items.
- Information gathering nature of youth in Chennai were considered based on the awareness of shopping web sites, internet and visiting physical store before buying online.
- The awareness of shopping websites have been analyzed based on five variables such as word of mouth, print & TV media, search engine, social media and link emails.
- The social media has been indicated as first preference of information gathering nature among the respondents. It is followed by word of mouth and print & TV media. Email links were indicated as least preference.
- The usage of internet has been analyzed based on seven variables such as research, social media, games,

shopping, information, entertainment and business.

- Information, entertainment and social media were the first three preferences by the respondents. The least preferences were indicated as business and games.
- The digital shoppers willing to visit physical store before buying products online have been analyzed based on four variables such as quality check, fit & comfort check, feel of garment and price check.
- The digital shoppers use to visit the physical stores before buying online for checking the price followed by feel and quality of the garment.
- All the variables such as quality check, fit & comfort check, feel of garment and price check thus taken up for the study were positively correlated. Further all the variables in a 2-tailed correlation test were significant either at 95% level or 99% level.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has been primarily indented to identify the information gathering nature among the digital shoppers. In order to identify the same, questionnaires were distributed randomly during their visit to the mall, of which 143 were responded. The response rate seems to be 81.7%. Further the objective of the study were to identify the means of awareness of digital shopping web sites among the respondents; to identify the role of internet on digital shopping and to identify whether the respondents visit physical store before buying online. Therefore the Information gathering nature of digital shoppers were considered based on the awareness of shopping web sites, internet and visiting physical store before buying online. The study indicates that there exist information gathering nature among the digital shoppers irrespective of gender and age. The respondents have good exposure on the means of awareness of digital shopping web sites among the respondents. Further the study also indicated the impact on the role of internet on digital shopping. It is surprise to know that the digital shopper prefer to visit physical store before buying online.

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